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The PLACE of PRAYER IN GOD'S PLAN OF WORLD CONQUEST

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INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT
OF NORTH AMERICA

111 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK CITY

DEVOTIONAL SERIES

The
PLACE of PRAYER in GOD'S
PLAN of WORLD CONQUEST

By
JAMES M. CAMPBELL

Being one of a series of devotional
pamphlets designed to cultivate the
spiritual resources of the church.

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PREFATORY

What Prayer Means to God

THAT prayer occupies a place of primacy in God's plan of world conquest is one of the most clearly revealed truths of the New Testament. There are many things which are helpful to the winning of the world to God. Prayer is indispensable. Without it everything else will fail. We may dispense with learning, with money and with organization, but we cannot dispense with prayer. Outward things when truly consecrated and rightly used will multiply the power of the church, but let her depend upon these for success and her power becomes her weakness.

In the great work of subjugating the world to himself, to which task God is calling the church with peculiar urgency today, there are things which he is seeking to accomplish by prayer that can be brought to pass in no other way. Hence, whatever service we may render him in other directions, if we restrain prayer before him, we are keeping back an essential condition of success and hindering him from working out the purposes of his beneficent will.

It will help us to realize this if we consider what prayer means to God, what he sees in it, and what he is seeking to accomplish by it. Generally the meaning of prayer has been considered from the human standpoint. We have concerned ourselves to know what it means to us. We have asked, "What profit to ourselves is there in prayer?" Would it not be well to consider prayer from the divine side also and ask, "What shall it profit God that we pray unto him? Why is he so anxious to find an interest in our prayers? Of what value to him are our prayers?" Only as we get God's point of view regarding prayer, can we appreciate its true worth, and in our own prayer life reach the highest place of privilege and power.

I. Prayer as a Way in Which God Expresses Himself

WHEN we truly pray, it is not so much we who pray as it is God who prays through us. The good thoughts and desires that spring up within us are as much an evidence of his brooding presence as the flowers that deck the earth are evidences of the touch of the summer sun. Holy men in every age have prayed as they were borne along by the Holy Spirit. What God has inbreathed into them as desire has been outbreathed by them as petition. From him comes the impulse to pray, and hence the restraining of prayer is nothing less than the resisting of the operation of the Spirit of God upon the heart.

THE IMPULSE AND POWER TO PRAY

And what shall we say of the call to prayer which today is heard on every hand? Is it not the living voice of the Spirit of God as he is *now* speaking to the churches? In whatever form it may come, from whatever quarter it may emanate, through whatever agency it may be mediated, it is as really his voice as if spoken audibly out of the open heavens. And woe to the church if, deaf to the Spirit's voice, blind to the opportunity of the hour, and recreant to the duty that brooks no delay, she fails to make adequate response to what is deepest in God's desire regarding her!

Besides giving the impulse to pray, God gives the power to pray. We pray not only as he moves us; we pray as he empowers us. He is our underlying support in all our efforts to pray. This truth is clearly expressed in the words, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity, for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Rom. 8:26, 27.

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The substance of this declaration is that God by his Spirit assists us in our halting, stumbling attempts to pray; that he puts himself into us so as to strengthen us at our weakest points; that he interprets his mind to us so that we can pray intelligently; that he voices our unspoken desires that struggle to the birth; and that he guides us to pray in accordance with his will. That we, as pupils in the school of Christ, have a divine Helper and Tutor, who is ever with us to teach us "how to pray as we ought," is one of the blessed truths which belong to the fullness of the Christian dispensation.

PRESENT-DAY CALL TO COLLECTIVE PRAYER God seeks not only to express himself through personal prayer, but he also seeks to express himself through *collective* prayer, especially through the prayer of the family, the church and the nation. A prayerless family, a prayerless church, or a prayerless nation is not true to the divine stirrings within it. It is not speaking for God as it ought, but is withholding the direct acknowledgement of its dependence upon his power, and the direct testimony to his fatherly love and care for which he is longing.

It is, however, a cause for profound gratitude that in the present hour of world crisis God is finding expression in this larger way as never before. In desolated homes family altars are being raised. The weight of the world's woes and the sense of its own inadequacy to heal them is pressing many a church upon its knees. The collapse of our modern civilization, with its crass materialism, thinly veneered with religious formalism, has thrown the nations of the world back upon God. All are seeking his help, from the conviction that they have nowhere else to go. In this way God is finding his own. He is getting back something of what he has given. The seed which he has sown, and for whose fruitage he has been patiently waiting, is at length coming to the harvesting.

THE ASSURANCE OF ANSWERED PRAYERS Touching the prayer which God incites and indites, it can be confidently affirmed that it is prayer which he is bound to answer. For he cannot deny himself. Only let us be sure that our prayer is from him; that it is not the selfish cry of human weakness and need; but that it is at bottom a cry from God himself—the echo of his inward whisperings—and all doubt as to its acceptance and realization will be banished forever.

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The absolute certainty of the answer to prayer on this ground is to be assumed; for Spirit-born prayer will have this mark; it will be in harmony with the will of God; and "this is the boldness that we have toward him that if we ask anything according to his will he heareth us" (I John 5:14). This kind of prayer implies, as Dr. Hastings has said, "The annihilation of all that in the human will is selfish, and the desire and effort of the soul to relate itself and all its interests to God and his will," and that not merely in the sense of acquiescing in his will, but also in the sense of accepting it and energetically working it out.

Protracted seasons of prayer are often required, not to wring reluctant blessings from God's hand, but to bring us into oneness with his will. When that is attained we can rest and wait, being well assured that the prayer that has settled down in his will is already answered.

ACCEPTABLE PRAYER IS GOD-LIKE IN SPIRIT Prayer that is inwrought by the Spirit of God reflects the character of God. It is free from all envy and hate; it breathes the spirit of forgiveness. Those who pray "in the Holy Spirit," pray in a holy spirit; they are filled with the love of compassion toward their enemies, and pray for them as Christ prayed for his murderers upon the cross. Had Christ prayed, "Father, destroy them," instead of "Father, forgive them," the scepter of moral supremacy would have fallen from his hands. And it will fall from the hands of his representatives unless they follow his example.

SWEEP AND SCOPE OF ACCEPTABLE PRAYER It embraces in its interests and aims the whole of humankind. It is free from all race prejudice and religious exclusiveness; it is utterly blind to all of earth's poor distinctions of rank and riches. It is born of love, and looks at humanity through God's eyes and feels toward them through God's heart. This is in a special sense a quality of Christian prayer, and differentiates it from all other prayer.

A true Christian is wholly altruistic in his praying. He prays, of course, for himself, but he does not allow his prayer to pass over from self-interest, which is right, to selfishness, which is wrong. He no more prays for himself alone than he lives for himself alone. He prays not for his own things only, but also for the things of others. He identifies himself with others, carries them on his heart before the throne, speaks for them

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when they are dumb, and pleads their cause as an advocate with the Father, pleading the cause of his brethren.

It is this quality of divine unselfishness that gives to intercessory prayer its peculiar value. It lifts a man above himself into the universal. It makes him one with Christ, his great High Priest, in his sympathy with the whole of humanity. When the Jewish high priest went into the holy place to intercede for the people he bore the names of the twelve tribes engraven on his breastplate; so when the Christian, as priest, enters the holy place as an intercessor he is to have the interests of all men on his heart. He is to make intercession "for all men," without distinction and without exception. There must be no narrowing of his sympathy so as to exclude any soul from his prayers. If he cannot pray for all men he cannot pray at all. The grudging of any soul the boon of heaven's mercy will kill the spirit of prayer and render it null and void, and will be conclusive evidence that it is not of God, but is from some lower source.

DECISIVE FACTOR IS INTERCESSION

The prayer of intercession is rightly regarded by W. E. Doughty as "the decisive human factor in the struggle for righteousness and redemption," and "the call to prayer as the call to use the great unused human resources of power." Dr. Arthur Smith speaks of it as "a deeply buried talent." And so it is. In one of Israel's darkest days Jehovah "wondered that there was no intercessor" (Isa. 59:16). He wondered that there was no one to cry to him on behalf of the people, no one ready to identify himself with their sins and confess them as if they were his own.

How greatly must he wonder today that the intercessors are so few, even within the church, which is the body of Christ, the organization in which he finds expression, and through which he works. There is nothing that has in it so much of that vicarious spirit, which is the life-blood of the religion of the Crucified; nothing that brings us so close to him in his great passion; nothing that possesses such great power for spiritual conquest, as intercession. Magnifying its importance, Robert E. Speer closes his pamphlet, "Prayer and Missions," with the stirring words:

"Of far greater service than any array of learning or gifts of eloquence, more to be desired than gold and fine gold, more to be sought than a great name, or apparent opportunities for

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larger usefulness, of deeper significance than high intellectual attainment or power of popular influence, is this gift. May God give it to each one of us!—the secret and sweetness of unceasing, prevailing, triumphant prayer for the coming of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

IMPERATIVE NEED IS
MISSIONARY PRAYER

Prayer for the progress of the kingdom is of the unselfish and universal character of intercessory prayer.

It is prayer at high-water mark. When a Christian prays "Thy kingdom come," if his prayer means anything, it means that henceforth in his life everything is to be subordinated to its coming. He virtually says: "Whether my own particular enterprise goes up or down, let the kingdom of God prevail; whether my plans succeed or fail, let the reign of God flourish." His prayer goes beyond all thought of self, puts God first, and becomes lost in him. In God it has its origin, in God it has its end.

Nor is this kind of prayer something added to a normal Christian experience. It belongs to the very essence of it. Christianity is a missionary religion; the Bible is a missionary book; the church is a missionary organization, and every Christian is himself a missionary, not, of course, in an official sense, but in a sense equally real. Upon his heart lies the burden of the world's redemption. For this his prayers ascend, for this his works overflow. So distinctive is this mark and sign that any one professing the Christian name who finds himself indifferent to the spiritual welfare of the meanest soul for whom Christ died, has every reason to examine into the validity of his celestial title deeds.



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II. Prayer as One of the Means by Which God Works

P RAYER is one of the means which God employs, within the spiritual sphere, for carrying on the work of human redemption; and so necessary is it to him that he cannot carry his work to a successful issue until he can induce men to pray.

That prayer leads to active service on the part of him who prays, goes without the saying. The man who prays sincerely does more than pray. He transmutes his prayers into deeds. Prayer, like faith, when separate from works is dead, being alone. Sometimes a man converts his prayers into ballots, at other times into bullets, at all times into some form of practical social service.

So certain is it that prayer will lead to works that it is dangerous to pray for anything unless we are prepared to do what we can to answer our own prayer. When we pray that a certain thing be brought to pass, the Lord is sure to ask: "What are you going to do about it?" When unaccompanied by action, prayer is a mere excuse for laziness.

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| PRAYER INVOLVES HUMAN EFFORT | But prayer is something more than the impulse to work; it is something more than the powder behind the ball that sends it singing to its mark; something more than the power which renders all other agencies effective; something more than preparation for work. It is work itself; a genuine part of our service to God and man; and it is a question if we ever do a finer work for God than when we pray for men, or do more to help on a good cause than when we pray for it. |
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The Latin proverb, *Laborare est orare*, "To work is to pray," is a one-sided sentiment. It is equally true that to pray is to work. Prayer is work of the highest kind. It is not merely a way of getting things from God, it is a way of doing things for God; it is not merely a way of securing things for others, it is a way of doing things for others; it is not merely communion,

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it is cooperation. In nothing do we unite forces more intimately with God, working together with him for human weal, than when we pray. And when our good works are at last summed up, nothing will count for more than our prayers.

AN EVERY-DAY PRACTICAL FORCE

James, the brother of our Lord, declares that "the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (James 5:16 R.V.). It is a practical force in the world's life, working out beneficently in every direction and imparting to others help of every kind, in body and spirit. Once released and set in motion, it never ceases to operate. It is like the incense which is the prayer of saints long since dead, which keeps ascending forever from the golden censers swung before the throne of God.

PRAYER BROADENS A MAN'S LIFE

Prayer widens the scope of a man's influence. The range of the activities of an ordinary life are very narrow and contracted. The race that is set before most men is clearly defined, and lies within limits which can not easily be passed. Outside a certain prescribed circle, the average man can push his influence but a very little way. Prayer changes all that. It redeems life from littleness, and enables one whose environment is of the narrowest to make his influence felt over a wide area.

Just as "the streams that turn the machinery of the world rise in solitary places," the streams which turn the machinery of our religious activities may rise in the garret of some unknown and solitary saint. By thus enlarging life, prayer supplies a form of usefulness which remains open when the other doors are shut; so that when, because of increasing years, or of physical infirmities, or of other providential causes, the outward life contracts, the spiritual life may enlarge, and the one who is most closely hemmed in by ever narrowing circumstances may keep in vital touch with the world around him, and connecting up with the great world-movements of his day, may have a part in every victory won for righteousness.

RENDERING HELP THROUGH PRAYER

Prayer is a form of social energy. It is a working force in society. Among the various ways in which one person can render help to another there is none more effective than prayer. When we can do nothing else for a friend, we can pray for him; and when he has come to an end

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of his own resources he is likely to present the request, "Pray for me." The fact that we instinctively pray for others, and that they ask us to pray for them when they are in trouble, implies that there exists a deep-rooted conviction that real and substantial benefits come to one man from the prayers of another.

Writing to the Colossians of Epaphras, one of the least noted of his fellow-workers, Paul tells them that he was "striving for them in his prayers" (Col. 4:12). He brought them reinforcement by wrestling for their souls with the powers of evil; he energized Godward on their behalf, drawing down blessing upon their heads and setting in motion influences which brought about results that could not be accounted for upon naturalistic grounds.

The need for this reenforcement is keenly felt by missionaries at their lonely outposts on the far-flung battle-lines of the church. Without it they feel shorn of their power. Listen to Gilmour of Mongolia as he exclaims: "Unprayed for I feel like a diver at the bottom of a river with no air to breathe; or like a fireman with an empty hose in a burning building." And no church is doing its full duty to its chosen representatives on the mission field that lavishly provides for their sustenance and equipment, and does not support them in their arduous work by prayer.

PRAYER AROUSES A UNIVERSAL INTEREST

Nothing enlarges the religious life more, or projects its influence farther, than prayer for foreign missions. It leads one to think internationally. "By it," as Dr. John R. Mott has well said, "the most obscure person can exercise as much power for the evangelization of the world as those who stand in the most prominent places." So subtle and far-reaching is the power that prayer possesses, that, as another has put it, "A man may go aside today, and shut his door, and truly spend half an hour in India for God." There is no spot in all the wide world that prayer cannot reach, and in which it cannot work.

When anyone prays for a certain missionary enterprise he makes a personal investment in it. In all that it accomplishes for God he has a part. So that the mother who stays at home and prays for her son who goes forth into one of the earth's dark places to proclaim God's evangel, is yoked with him in the fellowship of a common service.

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*"He with the sword of battle, she at home in prayer,
Both win a victory and both the glory share."*

And we may be sure that in the day of final ingathering those who work on the inside in prayer, and those who work on the outside in preaching and teaching, shall rejoice together.

VALUE OF A BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF PRAYER The nature of this great force called prayer, which is as distinct as gravitation or electricity, we can at best but dimly understand. We know in part, and we teach in part. Whenever we come into contact with God and the soul, as we do in prayer, we touch profound mysteries, whose depths our little sounding line of reason cannot reach. But the mysteries involved in prayer are in no wise greater than those involved in all the movements of life—of which it is one.

And just as we seek to understand what may be known of the facts of life, that we may adjust ourselves to things as they are, and work in harmony with God's world-plan, so must we endeavor to discover what we may of the fact of prayer that we may be able to cooperate with God more intelligently and efficiently in securing the ends which he is seeking to realize by it, as one of the agencies for the world's betterment. And blameworthy we cannot fail to be if a better knowledge of the nature and meaning of prayer does not lead to better praying.

PRAYER AS A REAL POWER "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," but its results are often too fine to be tabulated. They do not always come with outward show; they do not always flaunt before the world's eyes in statistics. Being largely spiritual, they are to be spiritually discerned. But they are real and abiding.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRAYER SERVICE This highest form of service, which is possible for every one to render, is something which God expects; and here, as elsewhere, responsibility is commensurate with ability. At a temperance meeting a speaker prayed that God would send his lightning to shatter the saloons, when some one remarked, "God has plenty of lightning, what he needs is conductors." And this is what he needs to shatter the strongholds of sin. He needs praying souls to act as conductors of his power.

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It is God's usual way of working to exercise his saving ministry to men through helpful personalities. He comes into contact with one soul through the medium of another. The leaven which he provides a human hand takes and hides in the meal; the seed of truth which he creates and supplies the husbandman casts into the bosom of the earth, and the power for the world's salvation, which is in him and from him, the praying soul conveys to other souls.

The man who prays is a man of power. He links up with the Infinite. He stands at the center of a circle of influence which reaches out in every direction. He *mediates* divine power. Being in direct communication with heaven, he becomes the channel between earth's emptiness and heaven's fullness. He also *radiates* divine power, sending out wave currents of spiritual energy which may be felt to earth's remotest bounds. What he does in the way of helping God can never be measured. So great is the power of prayer that were all the Christian people to stop praying the main agency for the establishment of the kingdom of God in the world would instantly come to an end.

To pray is to cooperate with God in the most vital and effective way that is open to us. Much as he needs all other forms of service that it may be possible for us to render, most of all he needs our prayers. And nothing that we give him will cost us more. As Gustav Warneck reminds us, "It is much more difficult to pray for missions than to give to them." A gift of money may be a thing of the hand, prayer is a thing of the heart; it is a part of life itself, a coinage of the soul that passes current above.

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| SPIRITUAL PRAYER IS DIFFICULT | As a form of spiritual activity, prayer involves effort. Formal prayer may be easy, spiritual prayer is difficult. We have literally to "lift up" our heads unto God. The times when the soul mounts up to God as on eagle's wings are few and far between. To take hold of God we have to stir ourselves up and draw upon every particle of latent power. |
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| HOW TO SUSTAIN EFFORT IN PRAYER | To sustain and quicken our interest in others so as to pray for them persistently we require to get acquainted with the facts of their lives. In like manner, to sustain interest in missions so as to make them the object of continuous prayer, we must study the missionary situation, giving attention to particular mission fields. Definite knowl- |
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edge of the facts will not only increase our prayer output, but will supply the basis for definite praying. In "*A Student in Arms*," Donald Hankey naively remarks, concerning a certain narrow type of clergyman, that "it is useless for him to spend more time in prayer until he has more to pray about."

A survey of the mission field will do that. It will give a Christian man more to pray about; it will increase the number of his vital and worthwhile interests; and before he knows it the motto, "I ought to pray," will be changed into "I love to pray." As he muses upon what he has discovered touching the appalling conditions of the heathen world, the fire of a holy passion will burn within his breast, and he will be ready to put into the work something of the self-sacrifice displayed by our youth when they go to battle for a great ideal.

THE INCREASE OF PRAYER POWER

Like every other talent, prayer power is increased by use. The reward of praying much is the ability to pray more and better. This is true of prayer of every kind; its reflex influence is simply incalculable. But in a very peculiar degree increased effort in prayer on behalf of others brings an increase of blessing. "He that watereth others, himself shall be watered."

The more altruistic prayer is in its spirit the more favorably does it react on the one who offers it. It is for this reason that prayer for foreign missions yields such bountiful returns. By deepening its interest in foreign missions the home church always replenishes its own exchequer; for never does the principle fail, laid down in Prov. 11:24, (R.V.), "There is that scattereth and increaseth yet more; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want."

It is frequently said that the demand of the hour is for better workers; equally true is it that the demand is for better pray-ers. Without improved prayer the work of God will lag. Unless we match our advanced methods of work with advanced methods of prayer, God will be disappointed in us, and the cause of the world's redemption, upon which his heart is set, and for which he is working, will suffer.

GOD DESIRES OUR FELLOWSHIP

With a longing which cannot be measured, God desires our fellowship, our confidence, and our co-operation in prayer; and desiring them, he asks for them. Not only is he working within to bring forth the spirit of prayer in

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our hearts, he is also seeking to incite us to prayer by the invitations to pray with which the pages of scripture are sprinkled. He desires, as our Father, that we come into filial relation with him; that we cry to him in the spirit of adoption; that we open our hearts to him; and that we tarry long in his company. Until he can get the best into us, and get the best out of us by our prayers, he cannot be satisfied.

With strong insistence we are being told what is needed today is a great prayer-drive, a mighty prayer-thrust against the enemies of Christ. That such a movement may have its value is not to be denied. But what is still more urgently demanded is steady, persevering prayer-push, inspired by the belief that prayer is always answered by a direct outflow of saving influence; that when it is offered something always happens; that to pray is to set loose a new force which begins to work at once; and that although it may take God a long time to bring about the desired result, things are being done in the unseen in answer to prayer which, by and by, will be made openly manifest in the seen, that all may behold and wonder.

When you are discouraged because of the absence of visible results, it is well to remember that no true prayer ever falls to the ground; and that every blow directed by it against the strongholds of sin loosens something, and by and by an opening may be made in the solid wall of opposition through which the legions of the cross will pour to victory.

Perseverance in prayer is therefore needed just as much as perseverance in any other kind of moral endeavor. We are to "pray without ceasing," because every prayer tells, and the thing we labor for may be lost if prayer be given up. How often it may have happened we know not, that we have ceased to pray when another ounce of pressure would have tipped the scales.

And furthermore, we are to continue in prayer—not "until God shall hear," as a recent world-wide call to intercession wrongly puts it, but—because he does hear, and every prayer meets with an instant response in his infinite heart and is answered to his utmost.

III. Prayer as a Way in Which God Fulfills Himself

P RAYER is one of the forces by which God is seeking to carry to fruition his eternal purpose of redemption, in the establishment among men of a new social order, which on its human side is a democracy—the brotherhood of man; and on its divine side a theocracy—the kingdom of God. Christianity is a movement possessing creative power; it professes to be able to make all things new, and in this work of world renewal one of the creative forces upon which it depends is prayer. Without prayer it will fail utterly in the accomplishment of its ultimate end.

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| GOD'S PLAN CERTAIN OF FULFILMENT | That the redemptive purpose of God will ultimately be carried out is one of the fundamental truths upon which prayer must rest. If we are not sure of God, if we are not sure of his power to solve the problems of life and of the world, faith will falter and prayer will cease. |
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The reason why faith ever wavers is because we do not see far enough. If we saw what God sees we would abound in hope. Where we see the acorn he sees the oak, where we see the process he sees the finished product, where we see the beginning he sees the end.

In a notable utterance the prophet Isaiah represents Jehovah as having the walls of Jerusalem continually before him when as yet the city was a heap of ruins (Is. 49:16). Where others saw only ruins he saw the walls of a city rebuilt. And today, where others see a world in ruins, those who have received the divine anointing see "a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

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| THE WORLD IS NOT GO- ING TO DESTRUCTION | Sin cannot always triumph; hate cannot always endure; selfishness cannot always prosper. Despite many checks, the march of events is forward, and every nation that is not going God's way will be halted and turned back. |
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Christ, the world's Redeemer, has lodged in the heart of the world a power which contains the potency and promise of its ultimate redemption. His cross is no failure, but is still, as it always has been and ever shall be, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

And just as its power has been seen in the transformation of individual lives, so shall it be seen in the transformation of the common life of man. When that end is reached the perfect expression of himself which God found in one life will be found in the whole life of humanity. With such a prospect before us we do not pray uncertainly, as those who beat the air, for we pray for that which is surely coming, and by our praying help to bring it.

NEED FOR PATIENCE IN PRAYER

As in other days, so today many are seeking a short cut to the millennium. They are wondering why the Almighty does not smite to the dust all who oppose his rule. They forget that God cannot force men to be good. Were he to overpower the free will of man he would overturn the whole order of things upon which his moral government rests; and would be following the course of those scourges of humanity who make of the world a wilderness and call it peace; and in doing this he would be acknowledging the present moral method of redemption to be a stupendous failure.

If God has to work and wait patiently for moral results, so have we. Prayer, though powerful beyond our utmost imaginings, is not irresistible within the moral sphere. It is not only a psychic and mental force, it is preeminently a *moral* force, and, like all other forms of moral force, it is suasive in its influence. It puts on men legitimate moral pressure, and leaves them free.

INTELLIGENT PRAYER AND GOD'S METHODS

To pray intelligently for success in any work of human uplift is therefore to pray for the vanquishment of evil and the enthronement of righteousness *by moral means*. Dr. W. E. Orchard is justified in saying, "Civilization is wrong; the social system is wrong to its very depths. There is no hope in the man of today, there is only hope in God. What we want today is nothing less than the conversion of the world, a radical change in the heart of man."

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Nothing short of this will suffice. The world needs more than reform; it needs regeneration. It must be born again before it can enter the kingdom of promise; and those who in their praying would meet the world at its place of deepest need will not rest content with its improvement, but will be satisfied only with its full redemption.

THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER PLUS—

To carry out God's plan of world conquest we must make use of all the means which he has appointed.

Along with prayer there must be the preaching of the word, the one being directed to God, the other to man. To dispense with either would be like a bird trying to fly with one wing. It is utterly futile to pray for the conversion of the world if we are not at the same time endeavoring to make known the gospel of Christ, which is the divinely appointed means of world conquest. To proclaim the immutable law of righteousness as set forth in the sermon on the mount is not enough. That must be enforced and made effective by connecting it with what was done on the mount called Calvary. A crossless religion is a religion void of power, and no amount of praying will avail if the circuit be broken between the law and the gospel.

MAKING NEW ADJUSTMENTS

Many of the things for which we contended in the past will, in these new days, appear poor and paltry.

The essential things in religion will alone be valued. Religion will be tested by its practical effects, and that only which can be found to be profitable will endure. One of the things by which the religion of the future will be marked will be a heightened sense of the value of prayer.

God was made very real to many in the days of storm and stress. Out of the depths men cried unto him, and he came to them. They met him face to face. Their intercourse with him may not always have been conventional and dignified, but it was sincere. Nor readily will they forget how they were forced to fall back upon him when all other help failed them, and that he brought them relief in the hour of their sore distress.

Family altars will be rebuilt, and the smouldering fires hid among the cold gray ashes of many a church altar will be fanned into a flame. There will be a revival of prayer, which may take on some unexpected forms. New adjustments will have to be made. For the new wine we will have to provide

THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN

new wine-skins. Prayer-thought will change. The practice of prayer will be modified, but prayer itself will increase in volume and in power, and will be a more potent factor than it ever has been in the spread of the kingdom.

UNITED PRAYER

The men at the front learned the lesson of union. They saw that military operations failed of the highest success until there was unity of action and the separate fingers became a closed fist which dealt effective blows. This lesson of unity, which will be certain to have its application to religious work, will have a direct bearing on prayer. Those who have fought together will pray together. They will shame us out of our un-Christian separateness and will make short work of our dividing ecclesiastical fences; and by instituting prayer leagues of various kinds will bind into one fellowship of spiritual service all the followers of Christ throughout the world.

In his first prayer, called "The Lord's Prayer," the Master taught his disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom. In his farewell prayer, which may be called his brotherly prayer of intercession, he told them how the kingdom is to come. He showed that it is to come by the union of his people. He prayed that they might all be one as he and the Father are one, in order that by showing a united front the world might believe in him as the one whom the Father had sent. Whatever may have been gained in the past by church divisions in the way of giving emphasis to the neglected truths, nothing can be more evident than that the present-day movement of the Spirit of God is toward union; and those who are helping to keep the barriers up may well consider whether they may not be standing in the Spirit's way.

THE URGENCY OF THE PRESENT HOUR

That the urgency of the hour is great is universally felt. Fields are whitening to the harvest. It is not that new doors are opening—the whole world is an open door. If before the outbreak of the war John R. Mott was warranted in declaring we had come to the greatest crisis in the world's history with regard to missions, what is to be said of the world situation of today? Perhaps never before were so many souls approachable, impressionable, and plastic to the touch of spiritual influence. Things are in the crucible, and are ready to take the shape of the mold into which they are poured. Before long they will cool and harden. Now is the time of opportunity, the time of destiny.

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How to meet this situation is the question. Various suggestions are being offered, but one thing is certain, it cannot be met without prayer, nor can it be met by giving to prayer a secondary place. The first thing we are called upon to do is not to organize and mobilize our forces, important as that is, but to pray. "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2). Prayer will bring missionary recruits; it will bring money into the treasury; it will bring everything we need for the finishing of the work that is given the church to do.

BUILDING UP OUR SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

It was a happy thought, born, without doubt, of the Spirit of God, that led the directors of the Joint Centenary of the Methodist Episcopal Church to put the direction of the first work of their program in the hands of a joint committee "for the *development of spiritual resources*," which has as its goal the enlistment of thousands of intercessors. That certainly is an instance of putting the emphasis at the right place, for the development of spiritual resources will naturally and necessarily bring with it the development of resources of all other kinds. Any church that is true to this ideal will have the opportunity of proving to the world anew that God honors his people in the measure in which they lean upon his everlasting arm and put their dependence upon spiritual forces.

WHAT DOES CHRIST EXPECT OF US?

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that Christ, "when he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God, henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet" (10:12, 13). Upon what is the expectation of Christ regarding the subjugation of his enemies based if not upon the fidelity of his people? He has made the success of his kingdom dependent upon them. If they fail him things will go backward, if they are true to him they will go forward.

But let us beware of being enmeshed in a figure of speech. The Christ who is seated at the right hand of the Father is the Christ who says to everyone who goes forth to carry out his great commission: "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

The church needs a larger Christ; or, if you will, a larger conception of Christ; it needs a Christ who can be in heaven and

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on earth at the same time; a Christ who is interceding for his people above and "working with them" here. Those who think of him as an absentee sometimes wonder whether these days of upheaval and change may not presage some cataclysmic event connected with his second advent. What his program will be in the future may be very different from what we anticipate, but one thing is certain: He is now with us, and is going forth "conquering and to conquer," as John beheld him in his apocalyptic vision. He is surely coming in the sense at least that he is coming to his own—coming "in his kingdom."

We have not exhausted our resources in Christ. His name is Wonderful, and he has many surprises for us in the future. In such an hour as we think not there may be a sudden outbursting of his glory. All power belongs to him; all our hopes hang upon him; the world's need of him was never greater. The most outstanding fact of the present is the fact of his presence. The future cannot bring him nearer; all that it can do is to give us a fuller revelation of his presence, a greater manifestation of his power, a brighter outshining of his glory.

And as we take up the prayer with which the sacred canon closes, "Come, Lord Jesus," if we give to it its present-day significance what we will pray for will be the epiphany of our unseen Lord who is ever with us—the Head and Leader of his church, the unacknowledged King of the ages—and the answer to that prayer will be at once the fulfilment of human hope, and the fulfilment of the redemptive purpose of God.

